

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: _____ F. _____

Date: September 27, 2006

Topic: First Review of a Request to Extend Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan and Approval of an Accreditation Rating for Hampton Harbour Academy from the Hampton City Public Schools

Presenter: Mrs. Kathleen M. Smith, Director of the Office of School Improvement
Dr. Patricia J. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and
Ms. Cynthia L. Cooper, Director Adult Education and Alternative Education,
Hampton City Public Schools

Telephone Number: 804-225-2865 **E-Mail Address:** Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov

Origin:

____ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

X Board review required by
____ State or federal law or regulation
X Board of Education regulation
____ Other: _____

X Action requested at this meeting ____ Action requested at future meeting: _____
(date)

Previous Review/Action:

____ No previous board review/action

X Previous review/action
date October 26, 2005

action Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan from Hampton City Public Schools

Background Information:

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* effective September 7, 2006, Section 8 VAC 20-131.280.C. of the standards states:

Subject to the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-330, the governing school board of special purpose schools such as those provided for in §22.1-26 of the Code, Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the Board of Education. Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school and approved by the Board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50.

Hampton City Public Schools received the first approval of a one-year alternative accreditation plan for Hampton Harbour Academy on October 26, 2005, with the provision that future extensions would be contingent upon the submission of an evaluation showing that the state objectives of the program and evaluative criteria have been met.

Summary of Major Elements:

Hampton Harbour Academy (HHA) is an alternative charter school that serves students in grades six through eight who are at least two years behind their grade cohort group. These students have been retained more than once, some students are reading as much as four years behind their chronological age group and are equally behind in mathematics.

The program of instruction has the following components:

- focuses instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- offers many opportunities for hands-on and high interest work and various activities in class to keep students engaged;
- integrates curriculum from elective courses into core academics;
- provides tutoring and intensive intervention to students during the school day;
- incorporates physical education into the day with wellness activities;
- teaches science and history/social sciences using interdisciplinary project learning;
- provides six hours of instruction per day;
- limits class size to 10 students per class; and
- offers opportunities for career exploration.

As a part of the approval of the alternative accreditation plan, the Board approved waivers of the following provisions of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* as required in 8 VAC 20-131-90 A-D as follows:

- A. The middle school shall provide each student a program of instruction, which corresponds, to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science.

In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, foreign language, physical education and health, and career and technical exploration.

- B. The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the-eighth grade. Courses in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science shall be required. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration.
- C. Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth-grade students. For any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board. Notice of this provision must be provided to parents with a deadline and format for making such a request. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent a middle school from offering any other credit-bearing courses for graduation.
- D. To provide students a sufficient opportunity to learn, each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in each of the four disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. Sixth-grade students may receive an alternative schedule of instruction provided each student receives at least 560 total clock hours of instruction in the four academic disciplines.

In the approved plan, accreditation for Hampton Harbour Academy is based on the following criterion: 70% of the eighth-grade students in the program for a full academic year will pass the eighth-grade Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in English, writing and mathematics. Scores on the statewide assessments in sixth and seventh grades will not be used as accreditation measures unless they improve the school's accreditation status.

For school year 2005-2006, Hampton Public Schools reports that in accordance with the plan, 49 students are classified as eighth graders based on their standardized scores in reading. For accountability measures, 40 of those students were enrolled for the full academic year. Based on spring SOL assessments, the pass rates for this group are as follows:

Math	50.0%	(19 of 38 students tested)
RLR	55.5%	(20 of 36 students tested)
Writing	92.1%	(35 of 38 students tested)
English	74.3%	(55 of 74 RLR and Writing combined)

Hampton Harbour Academy reports that it has not met its criteria for full accreditation. However, it is applying for a rating of Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-300. Hampton Harbour Academy has met the 70% pass rate in English and the 25% increase over 1999 SOL pass rates in areas below 70%. This school did not exist in 1999, but the pass rate in mathematics was 16% in the first year, 2002-2003. The pass rate for 2006 shows a gain of 34% over that initial posted score. The final criteria for this rating, 60% combined pass rate in other subjects, does not apply in this case. The

alternative accreditation plan for Hampton Harbour Academy specifies only English and mathematics as requisite subjects for accountability measures.

Based on the school's improvement and evaluation showing that the objectives of the program have been met, Hampton City Public Schools requests a three-year extension of the alternative accreditation plan and the rating of Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation for Hampton Harbour Academy.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the request to extend the alternative accreditation plan for three years and approve the rating of Accreditation Withheld/ Improving School Near Accreditation for Hampton Harbour Academy.

Impact on Resources: There is no impact on the resources of the Department of Education.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: Staff of the Department of Education will advise the Hampton City Public Schools of the Board's action.



Hampton City Schools Administrative Center

ONE FRANKLIN STREET
Hampton, Virginia 23669-3570

Patrick J. Russo, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

September 6, 2006

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge, President
Virginia State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

Dear Dr. Emblidge:

Hampton City Schools is requesting a three-year extension of the Alternative Accreditation Plan granted by the State Board of Education for Hampton Harbour Academy for the 2005 – 2006 school year. The school division is requesting no changes in the plan or the waivers inherent. The school has made significant progress with the change in its instructional model and, as you know, we have filed a request for the board to consider a finding of "Accreditation Withheld" based on that progress. In addition to the SOL pass percentage gains reported in that request, we would ask that the board consider other benchmarks of progress noted below.

READING GAIN

While only 30% of the school's 90 students began the year with a reading level which classified them as 8th graders, an additional 23% made the 7.4 mark to be promoted by the third quarter. An additional 18% made substantial reading gain of greater than one year, but still fell short of the 7.4 mark. Thus, 71% of Hampton Harbour Academy's students made significant reading gains during the course of the year.

ATTENDANCE

Although the attendance rates for students have risen steadily since the assignment of the current principal to the school, after the introduction of the new instructional model, Hampton Harbour Academy's attendance rate approached the rate for the division for the first time in 2005-2006.

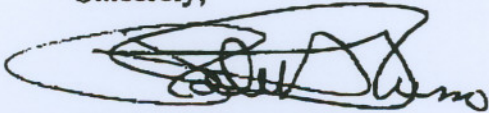
Year	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
ADA	83%	90%	89%	94%

DISCIPLINE

While the number of suspensions for minor offenses (e.g., disruption, disrespect) remained comparable to prior years, more serious offenses declined significantly. The school reduced suspensions for offenses such as fighting by 57% under the new model and had no instances of a more serious offense (e.g. controlled substance, weapon possession) at all during the 2005-2006 school year.

As you are aware, Hampton Harbour Academy is just beginning its second year under the new instructional model. Although we have not reached every goal we have set, we have made notable improvements in reading performance, attendance, and discipline in addition to the gains in SOL performance cited in our request for a status of "Accreditation Withheld". We believe in the efficacy of this model and request that the board grant a three-year extension of our alternative accreditation plan so we may continue our work with these students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "P. Russo", enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Patrick J. Russo, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.
Dr. Patricia Wright
Ms. Kathleen Smith



Hampton City Schools Administrative Center

ONE FRANKLIN STREET
Hampton, Virginia 23669-3570

Patrick J. Russo, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge, President
Virginia State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

August 2, 2006

Dear ~~Dr.~~ ^{Mark} Emblidge;

Pursuant to the Alternative Accreditation Plan in effect for Hampton Harbour Academy, Hampton City Schools is reporting the accreditation status for this charter middle school for 2006. Accreditation is based solely on the SOL end of year tests in math, writing, and reading (RLR) for 8th grade students who attended for the full academic year. Please find enclosed the attached report of student SOL scores for verification.

In accordance with the plan, students at Hampton Harbour Academy are classified as 8th graders based on their standardized test scores in reading. There were 49 such students for the 2005-2006 academic year. 40 of those students were enrolled for the full academic year (85% or more of the instructional calendar) making their scores usable as accountability measures. The pass percentages for this group are as follows:

Math =	50%	(19 of 38 students tested)
RLR =	55.5%	(20 of 36 students tested)
Writing =	92.1%	(35 of 38 students tested)
English (RLR + Writing) =	74.3%	(55 of 74 test scores)

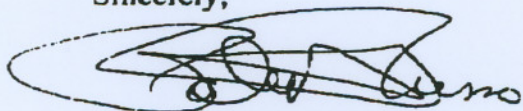
After reviewing the regulations and discussing the matter with the Director of School Improvement, we request that the school's accreditation status be "Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation" based on evaluation of the three criteria as follows:

1. 70% pass rate in English = MET
2. 60% combined pass rate in other subjects = DOES NOT APPLY. The alternative accreditation plan for this school specifies only English and math as requisite subjects for accountability measures.
3. 25% increase over 1999 SOL pass rates in areas below 70% = MET. This school did not exist in 1999, but the pass rate in math (the other applicable area) was 16% in its first year, 2002-2003. The pass rate for 2006 shows a gain of 34% over that initial posted score.

Hampton Harbour Academy is in its first year under a new instructional model and an alternative accreditation plan. We realize the request for the "Accreditation Withheld" status is unusual in that the regulations were designed with traditional schools in mind. The special purpose of this school, in addressing the academic needs of at-risk and over-aged students, makes it unique and, we believe, warrants the application of this accreditation status.

We are aware that this rating is available for a single year and so grants us a one-year "reprieve" only. Given the massive changes in the instructional program and such tremendous improvements in the achievement of its students, we are confident that Hampton Harbour will continue show gains and will meet accreditation standards if given the additional time to do so. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need additional information in your deliberations. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Russo", enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

Patrick J. Russo, Ed.D.

Cc: Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.
Dr. Patricia Wright
Ms. Kathleen Smith

Enclosure